on the market. If you praise so much my article on Wilde (I mean the last one), this is just because I say nothing new in it. My second regular chronicle (of this year) on the other hand awoke no echoes anywhere; the unaccustomed truths I put into it could have been assimilated only if they had been watered down with pages of commonplaces.[26]

Would it not be possible to write a whole volume (and a successful one) on this subject, historically developing this argument that I merely suggested there:

A race as mixed as ours recognizes through their expression the elements that make it up. By an easy imitation, what it first expresses is what has already been expressed in a preceding period. Who dares to assert that the Latin elements are the strongest in our race—and not simply the most articulate, for very obvious reasons? What has not yet been expressed is no less important because it is less precocious. It is merely harder to invent than to imitate. We strengthen ourselves with the past; but where does that get us? Barres is one such: leaning heavily as against a wall; motionless.

You cannot imagine an author so great that his most banal qualities are not the first to be appreciated. The crowd always enters by way of the "commons" — and most often never gets beyond them.

1 September

I am again losing my footing; I am letting myself be carried along by the monotonous current. A great drowsiness benumbs me from my awakening until evening; games occasionally shake it off, but I am gradually losing the habit of effort.. I compare what I am to what I once was, to what I should have liked to be. If only . . . but no, everything becomes soft in such an easy existence. Sensual pleasure per-

meates everything; my finest virtues are dissipated and even the expression of my despair is blunted.

How can I call absurd a rule of conduct that would have protected me against this? At one and the same time my reason condemns it and calls out for it in vain. If I had a father confessor, I should go to him and say: Impose upon me the most arbitrary discipline and today I shall say it is wisdom; if I cling to some belief that my reason mocks, this is because I hope to find in it some power against myself.

As soon as a healthy day comes along, I shall blush at having written this.

[26] The article on Wilde is the one on *De Profundts* that appeared in the *Ermitage* for 15 August 1905. The "dhronicle** is the second of Gide's regular articles in the form of imaginary interviews, which appeared in the *Ermxtage* for February 1905. Both are collected in the fourth volume of the *(Euvtes compUtes.*